

STUDENT VISAS

First Time Student Applicants (F-1 and M-1 visas)

If you are going to the U.S. primarily for tourism, but want to take a short course of study of less than 18 hours per week, you may do so on a tourist visa. Otherwise, please read this message for general information on how to apply for an F1 or M1 student visa. To the extent possible, students should bring the documents suggested below, as well as any other documents that might help establish their ties to the local community.

To allow time to overcome any unforeseen problems that might arise, students are encouraged to apply for their visas several weeks before they plan to travel.

Students should **not** apply more than 90 days before the registration date noted on the I-20 and should not enter the US 30 days prior to commencement of their course

What is Needed to Apply for a Student Visa?

All applicants for a student visa **must** provide:

- A Form I-20 obtained from a U.S. college, school or university. Please be sure to give all four pages of the I-20 form. The form must also be signed by you and by a school official in the appropriate places;
- An application Form DS-156, together with a Form DS-158. Both forms must be completed and signed. Some applicants will also be required to complete and sign Form DS-157.
- A passport valid for at least six months after your proposed date of entry into the United States;
- A receipt for visa processing fee.
- A receipt for the SEVIS fee of US \$100. This fee can be paid through the education institution in the US or can be paid using a credit card by logging on to www.fmjfee.com
- One recent passport photo with a clear background

Public School

There are certain restrictions on attending public school in the U.S. Persons who violate these restrictions may not receive another visa for a period of five years.

The restrictions apply only to students holding F-1 visas. They do not apply to students attending public school on derivative visas, such as F-2, J-2 or H-4 visas.

The restrictions also do not apply to students attending private schools on F-1 visas. The restrictions are:

- Students who attend public high schools in the U.S. are limited to twelve months of study.
- F-1 visas can no longer be issued to attend public elementary or middle schools (Kindergarten - 8th grade) or publicly-funded adult education programs.
- Before an F-1 visa for a public school can be issued, the student must show that the public school in the U.S. has been reimbursed for the full,

unsubsidized per capita cost of the education as calculated by the school. Reimbursement may be indicated on the I-20. Consular officers may request copies of canceled checks and/or receipts confirming the payment as needed.

NOTE: More information on specific questions can be obtained by calling the Call centre on 0900 87 847 or from www.usembassy.org.nz